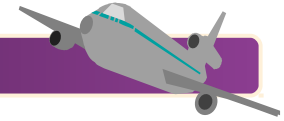


AUTHORIZING OFFICIAL (AO)

Lesson Outline

Defense Travel System Training Program

- **Who is an Authorizing Official (AO)**
- **AO Authority**
- **AO Functions**

Who is an Authorizing Official (AO)

Defense Travel System Training Program

- The official(s) who makes travel management decisions
- The supervisor responsible for the mission, budget and traveler
- Designated in writing as an accountable official - "Pecuniary Liability"
- When so designated, also performs duties of "Certifying Official (CO) "

AO Authority

- **Determines when TDY travel is necessary**
- **Reviews should-cost**
- **Authorizes trip arrangements**
- **Ensures correct line of accounting**
- **Establishes obligation for payment**
- **Reviews policy exceptions**
- **Verifies/approves request for reimbursement**

As Certifying Official (whether same as AO or not):

- ✔ Reviews required receipts (if deemed necessary)
- ✔ Certifies claims for payment

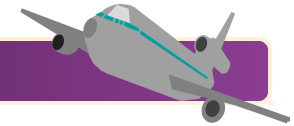
Self-Authorizing Official

Defense Travel System Training Program

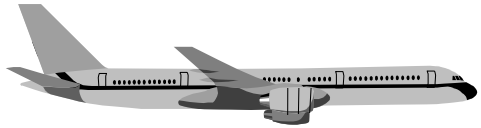
- **NO BLANKET TRAVEL ORDERS WITH DTS**
- **Some AOs designated, in writing, a "Self-Authorizing Official"**
- **May approve their own travel authorization**
- **CANNOT certify their own travel voucher**
- **Designation IAW Service/Agency policies and procedures**

How the AO Exercises Authority

Defense Travel System Training Program



AO AUTHORIZES/APPROVES:

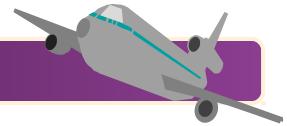


- **Standard government arrangements**
- **Alternative arrangements based on mission requirements, cost considerations and traveler preferences, if appropriate**
- **Excess trip expenses over and above standard arrangements that are appropriate to accomplish the mission**

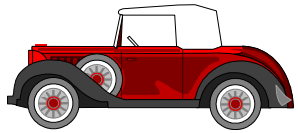
EXPENSE REPORT

AO Authority: Transportation

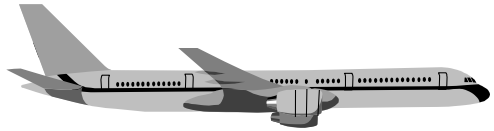
Defense Travel System Training Program



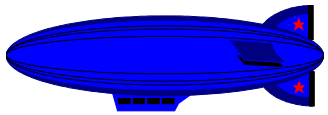
1. **Directs/Authorizes appropriate mode of travel**
   (Exception for private vehicle or rental car)



2. **Follows DOD policy to use contract "City Pairs" flights and coach-class seating**
   (AO "MUST" record rationale for not using contract flight on the travel authorization)

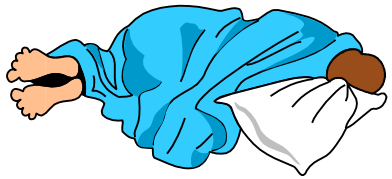


3. **Authority for other than contract flights when necessary for the mission - seating upgrade to premium class**
   (Higher authority required to approve 1st Class travel)

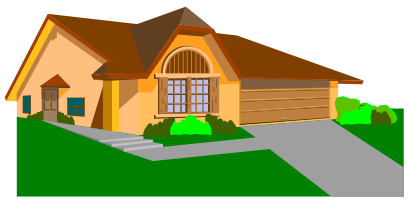


AO Authority: Transportation (Con't)

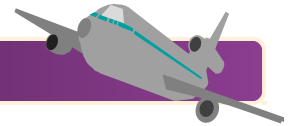
4. **Authorizes rest stops, when necessary, when travel is during normal sleeping hours or greater than 14 hours**



5. **For business TDY <u>ONLY</u> - may authorize trips home to the permanent duty station (PDS) - funds must be available to support the travel expense**

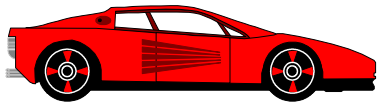


AO Authority: Transportation (Con't)

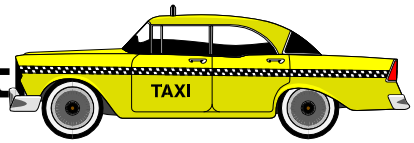


6. **May not approve the use of foreign flag carriers if U.S. flag carriers are available**

- **Authorizes private vehicle - makes certain the traveler is clear that the use is either (1) for the benefit of the Government or (2) for the convenience of the traveler**



- **Getting to and from t is covered**



AO Authority: Lodging

Defense Travel System Training Program

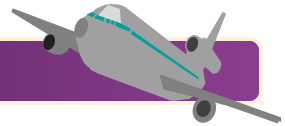
- **The "lodging plus" method used to reimburse TDY living expenses**

- **Travelers are paid the actual cost of lodging up to the per diem limit**

***However,* the AO may:**

- **Direct use of Government or commercial lodging, as the mission requires, for business travel**
- **Approve in advance of the trip reimbursement for lodgings in excess of the per diem amount up to 300% of the per diem rate**

AO Authority: Lodging (Con't)



- **At schoolhouse sites, the commanding officer determines if use of Government quarters is appropriate**

- **Will not approve lodging reimbursement for staying with family or friends**

- **See the JFTR/JTR for deployment, or TDY aboard ships**

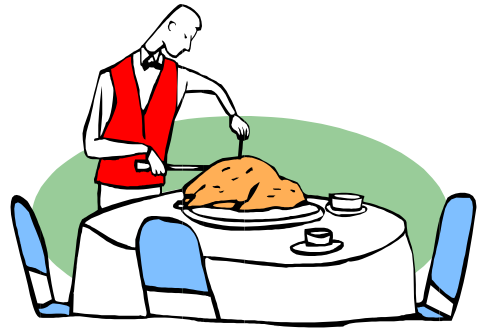
AO Authority: Meals

The Traveler is paid a set amount for meals; HOWEVER, the AO may:

- **Prescribe the Government meal rate**

  (ONLY IF QUARTERS ARE AVAILABLE AND MESS IS AVAILABLE ON THAT INSTALLATION)

- **Approve payment of full M&IE if use of government meal rate is directed but not available**
- **Reduce M&IE from full to proportional for meals provided**



AO Authority Reimbursable Expenses

Defense Travel System Training Program

Traveler will be reimbursed, with AO approval, for other necessary travel-related expenses such as:

- **All applicable lodging taxes**
- **ATM fees (government travel card o**
- **Traveler's check fees**
- **Telephone calls home (AO must limit to a $$$ amount)**
- **Currency conversion fees**

ALL ITEMS MUST BE TRAVEL RELATEDTO BE REIMBURSABLE

AO Authority
Special Situations

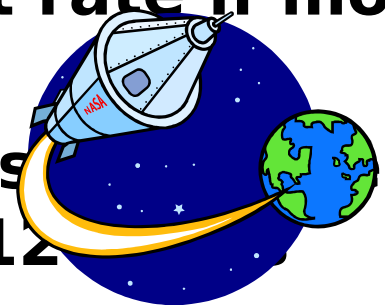
- **For 1 day TDY in Local Area of the PDS the AO will:**
  - ✔ **Approve necessary transportation expenses to and from the TDY location, if transportation is not provided.**
  - ✔ **Not approve meals, nor per diem.**

AO Authority
Special Situations

- **For 1 day TDY outside limits of PDS, with**

  TDY in excess of 12 hours, the AO will:

  - ✔ **Approve standard business transportation**
  - ✔ **Authorize M&IE rate of 75% for the TDY location (highest rate if more than one)**
  - ✔ **Civilians not reimburs[illegible]als unless TDY exceeds 12[illegible]**

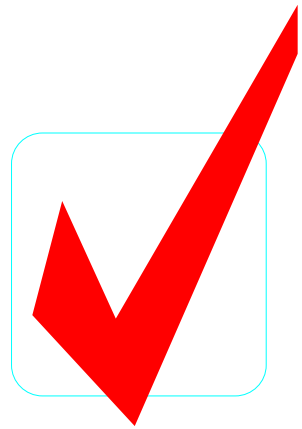


After the TDY Travel

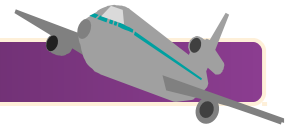
Defense Travel System Training Program

Authorizing Official MUST:

- Confirm that the travel occurred
- Ensure validity of claimed expenses
- Approve or disapprove traveler's exceptions
- Ensure traveler knows to retain required receipts (lodging receipt and any receipt $75.00 or more) for a period of 6 years, 3 months
- If also the Certifying Official (CO), verify required receipts (if deemed necessary) and certify the claim for payment



Obtaining Additional Information



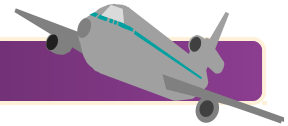
To assist them in their duties, AOs can obtain additional information from:

- **Defense Travel Administration (DTA)**
- **Defense Travel System WEB Site:**
  http://www.dtic.mil/travelink

Summary

- **Broad approval authority**
- **Be familiar with rules and regulations**
- **Know where to go for assistance**

TRUST YOUR TRAVELERS



QUESTIONS?